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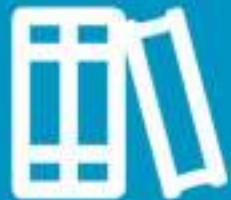
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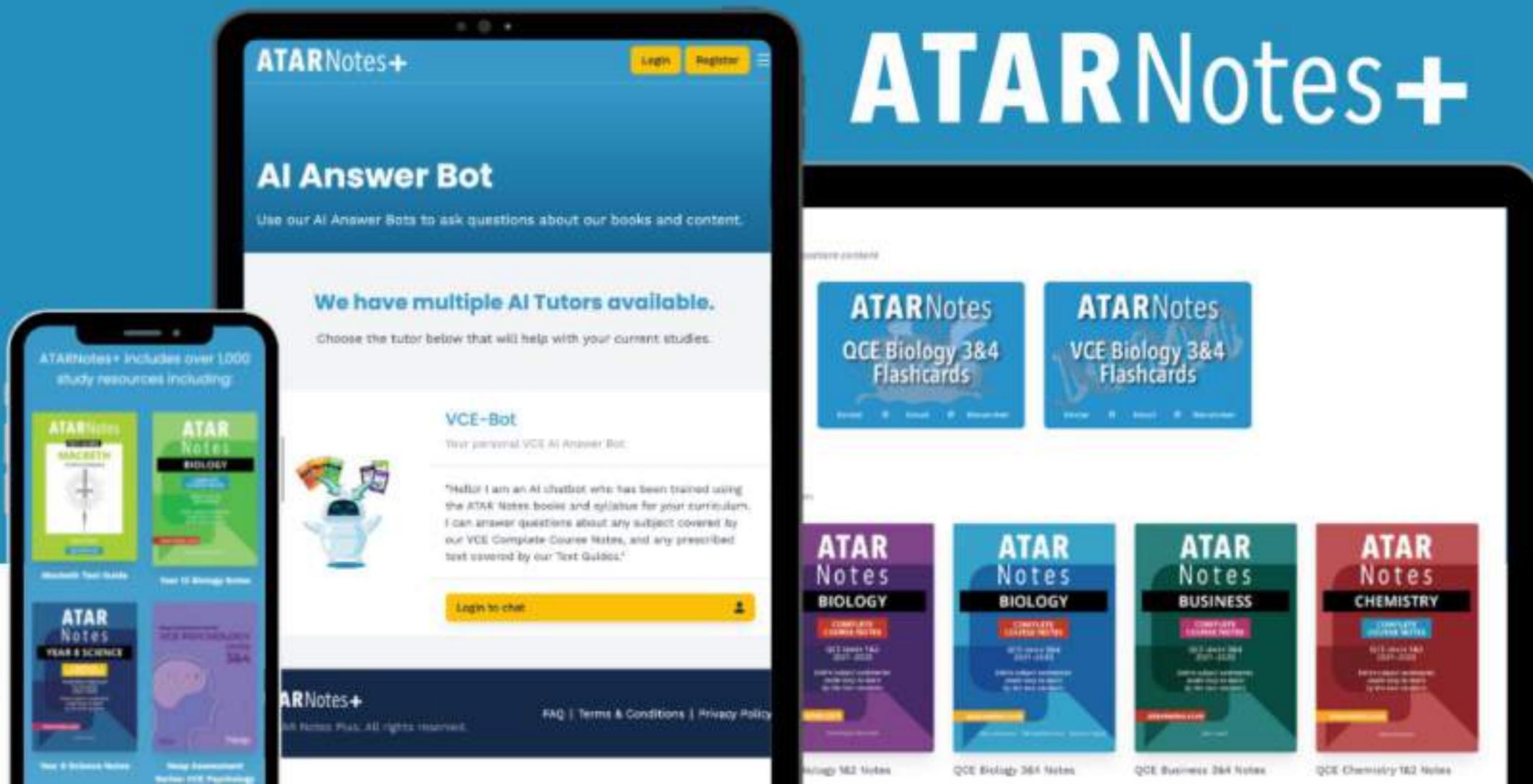
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ATARNotes

How to Ace VCE

Presented by:
Sunny Norkute

- Sunny Norkute
- Graduated in 2021
- ATAR – 96.70
- Study score of 47 in Legal Studies, and 40+ study scores for Literature, English, Further Maths and Psychology
- Studying a Bachelor of Paramedicine at Monash University

- Year 12 will be the hardest year of your life.”
- “To do well in Year 12 you have to be a mindless robot with no personality who studies at least [insert ridiculously high number here] hours every day.”
- “You **need** to study 24/7 in Year 12. There’s no time for a holiday. If you take a break, you **will** fail.”
- “Your ATAR is just a number and doesn’t define you.”
- “So... what do you want to do next year?”

- Mindset
- Organisation
- How to Study
- Other Tips

“Whether you think you can, or you think you can’t, you’re right.”

Everyone is capable of getting high scores in VCE

Doing well is not a matter of “*innate*” intelligence; it is more about **consistent hard work.**

Nothing is worse than looking back on VCE and feeling like you *could have done better.*

- **Change your mindset about due dates. Do the homework as soon as you get it, rather than just before it's due.**

Making this a habit **now** will make the rest of this year so much easier!!

Monday: Get a task that is due on Friday

Monday Night: Do the task

Thursday Night: Watch everyone else freak out about the task while you sit smugly at home

Friday: Hand in the task – yours is probably better than everyone else's seeing you didn't rush it the night before

- **Goal Setting**

Works for some, not for others.

If it works for you that's great, and I encourage you to use it.

My Attitude in VCE: Do as well as I could on every SAC and exam and see where it gets me

DONT. GIVE. UP. Just keep chipping away.

- **Work with your teacher**

Your teacher should be your friend, not your enemy!

Don't fall into the trap of developing a 'me against them' sort of attitude.

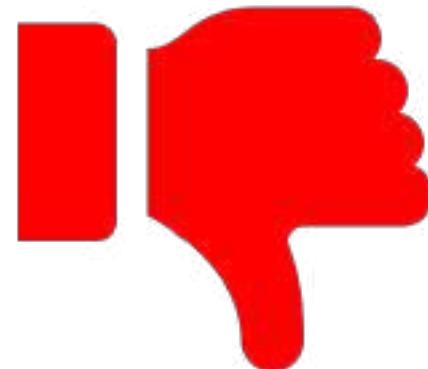
Your teacher can be your most valuable resource!

- Mindset
- Organisation
- How to Study
- Other Tips

How to organize yourself?

- Study timetables are one method, but I never liked them
- *Who wants to study Maths if you have an English SAC the next day?*
- *If you are going to use them, make a new one each week!*
- **To-do lists** give you **flexibility and motivation**.
- But there's a big difference between **a good one** and **a bad one**.

- To-do lists – **bad.**
- Revise Psychology
- Revise Legal Studies
- Revise Specialist Mathematics
- Job interview next week
- Get 99.95 ATAR



- **To-do lists – good.**
- Respond to Ms White's email
- Summarise Legal Studies class notes from Tuesday
- Revision questions 1-10 for Spesh SAC
- The 'optional – if you have the time' section
- Read Biology textbook chapter 9
- Clean room
- **Ticking off these goals increases motivation**



- **Have “study spaces” (and “no study spaces”).**

- Routine ☐ fewer distractions ☐ better study.
- Don’t try to ‘half-study’ and ‘half-relax’. Study properly, and then relax properly.
- It actually leads to *more enjoyment* (greater total utility).
- And it leads to a *higher quality of work*.

Routines:

- Having a **routine** is super important in VCE, and the earlier you develop one, the easier it will be to stick to
- It may not be easy at first, but once you have a routine, it takes a lot of the mental effort out of studying
- Getting these good habits early is key!!!

Routines - Example:

- During VCE, I travelled an hour each way to school every day. I also had sports and extracurriculars throughout the year and worked two jobs. You don't have to give everything up – a routine can help you work VCE around your life.
- I got into a habit of studying for 1-4 hours or so when I got home after school every day
- I never studied on a Friday after school or Sundays.
- I never studied past 9pm except prior to exams
- Did a bit of work each Saturday morning or evening, but most weekends were free to play sport, hang out with friends, utilise for hobbies etc.
- Good habits are **difficult to form**, but also **easy to stick to**.

Routine example – 2 hours of study:

- Monday - Thursday
- 4:30 - Get home from school
- 4:30 – 5:00 – Eat afternoon tea, Facebook scroll, text friends
- 5:00 – 5:55 – Study
- 5:55 – 6:00 – Break – Check phone, make coffee
- 6:00 – 6:55 – Study
- 6:55 onwards – Dinner, relax, Netflix, study a little bit more if a test the next day

- Mindset
- Organisation
- How to Study
- Other Tips

- Procrastination and laziness will get you **nowhere**.
- Be **consistent**.
- Come up with a **system** that works for you

An example of a system:

- ✓ **The night before every class:** Read over the relevant chapter so you know what to expect (optional)
- ✓ **During class:** Take down notes, particularly anything you didn't realise when reading
- ✓ **Later that night:** Make a summary, do questions – whatever works for you to consolidate information
- ✓ **Day after class:** Do assigned homework without looking at notes

- Physically write your to-do list down
- Have a notepad that every night you can write your list in and cross everything off
- When you write your to-do list – don't stop until you have fully finished
- If you overestimated how much you could get through and realize your list was unreasonable – leave it in your to-do book and come back to it the next day

- At the start of each month, create a bullet journal in your book – tick off each day you stick to your schedule
- Anything that helps hold yourself accountable really, really, helps
- Think of a physical reward to give yourself!! Something nice that you wouldn't usually get yourself (e.g. see if you can convince your parents to reward your good study habits)
- **Remember: Delayed gratification > Immediate reward (it's the literal biology of your brain)**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4 - OFF
7	8	9	10	11 - OFF
14	15	16	17	18 - OFF
21	22	23	24	25 - OFF
28	29	30	31	

- Make a conscious effort at the start of the year to set habits
- Make a conscious effort for 4 weeks to complete the schedule every day (unless there is something that makes it impossible)
- Once you are in a good habit, then you can be easier on yourself.
 - E.g. come home from school and you're tired? Give yourself a night off!
- **Let yourself off the hook because you deserve it, not because you can't be bothered**
 - **Self-discipline**
 - **This is what differentiated good students from bad students**

Have your own system – Do what works for you!

- Study in whichever way is most effective for you.
- Examples – questions, summaries, cue cards, posters, videos, mind maps, teaching others etc.
- Do what works for you – not what works for the smartest kid in the class.
- E.g. some high-achieving students didn't actually write notes in Year 11 or 12!

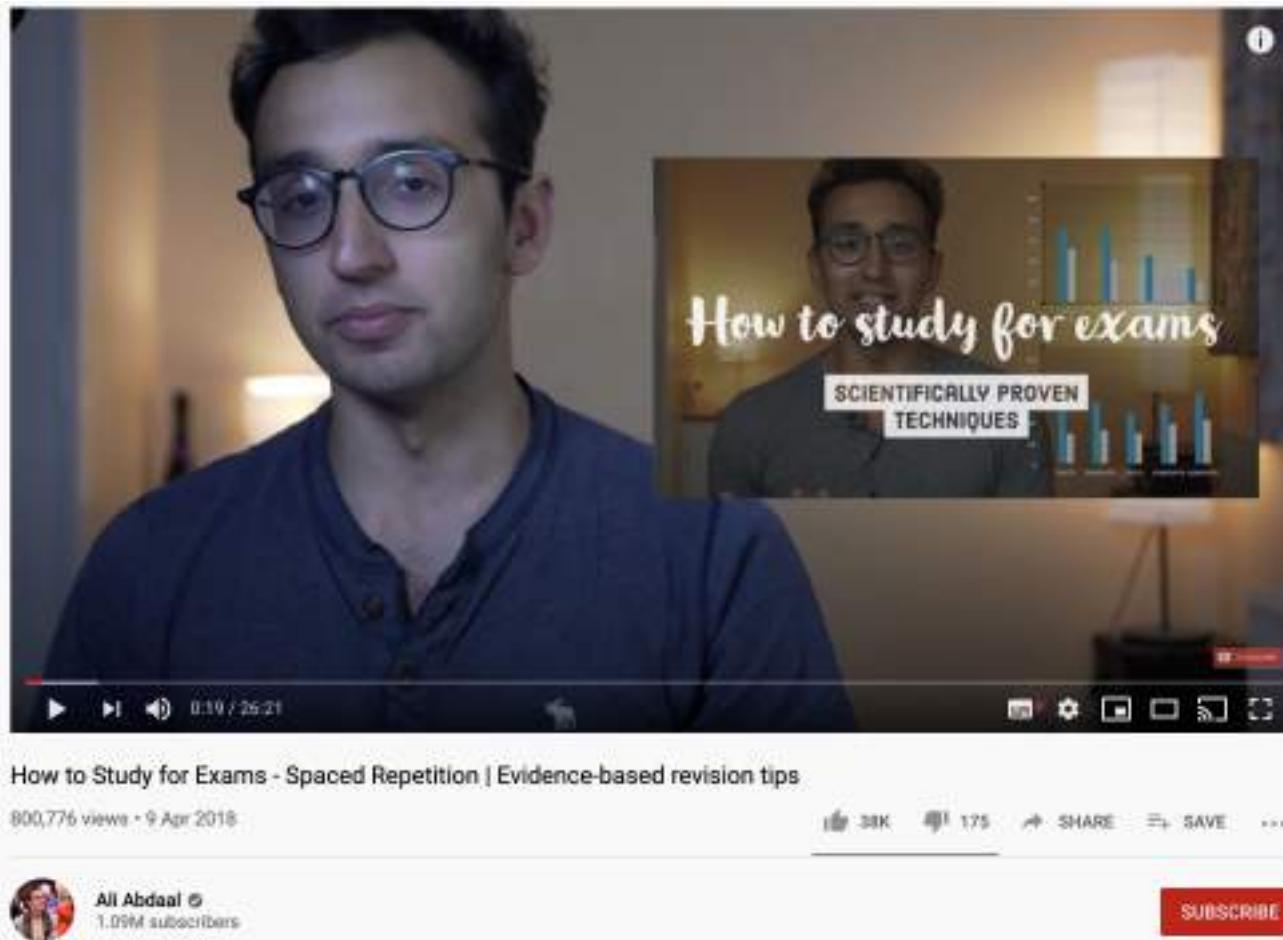
- My number one piece of advice for all VCE students:

“Understand everything, memorize nothing”

I tried to learn things to the point that they became logical, therefore I could never forget them

How To Study

Study Resources



How To Study

Timetables

GP topics	1st revision	2nd revision	
Chronic diseases	8/7/2020	9/9/2020	REDO
Hem/Palliative care	5/8/2020		
Ophthal	13/8/2020		
ENT	24/7/2020	1/9/2020	
Emergency		25/8/2020	
Derm	10/8/2020		
Miscellaneous (MSK, Cardio, Mens Health)	31/8/2020		
Miscellaneous (Resp, gastro)			
Womens predominant topics		Write questions	
STIs	3/7/2020	13/7/2020	REDO = particularly management
Menstrual cycle	6/8/2020	26/8/2020	REDO
Contraception	7/7/2020	23/7/2020	
Antenatal	20/7/2020	2/8/2020	
Labour and birthing	3/8/2020		
Obs emergencies	15/7/2020	25/7/2020	
Postpartum	21/7/2020	11/8/2020	
Menopause/urogynae	7/8/2020	21/8/2020	
Gynae-onc/surgery	14/7/2020	12/8/2020	
Paeds predominant			
Gastro	22/7/2020	18/8/2020	
Resp	10/7/2020	20/7/2020	
Neurology	5/8/2020	18/8/2020	
Cardio	16/7/2020	23/7/2020	
Urology	4/8/2020	20/8/2020	
Endo	24/8/2020		
Haem/onc	28/7/2020	13/8/2020	
ID	18/8/2020	8/9/2020	
MSK	27/7/2020	10/8/2020	
Neonate/newborn	11/8/2020	7/9/2020	
Developmental issues/adolescent	12/8/2020	31/8/2020	REDO = precocious puberty
Psych predominant			

+ Schedule GP Psychiatry Womens Paeds

How To Study

Active Recall

Respiratory	Asthma	Bronchiitis	Croup	Cystic Fibrosis
Airway obstruction	Risk factors and presentation for asthma?	Definition and epi of bronchiitis	Definition of croup	Definition of CF
How do you assess respiratory distress in infants?	Classification of acute asthma severity	Aetiology of bronchiitis	Epi of croup	Epi of CF
What is the difference between stridor and stertor?	Classification of chronic asthma severity	Risk factors for bronchiitis	Aetiology of croup	Pathophysiology of CF
What are the differences for acute stridor and how do they present?	Diagnosis and investigations of asthma in children	Presentation of bronchiitis	Presentation of croup	2 common organisms that cause infections + gram stain
What are the differences for chronic stridor and how do they present?	Acute asthma management children	Investigations for bronchiitis	Severity classification of croup	Presentation of CF - systems affected + neonatal presentation
Inhaled foreign body presentation?	Chronic asthma management children	Management of bronchiitis	Investigations of croup	What percentage have meconium ileus and how is it treated
Inhaled foreign body management?	How touscare for a spacer	Complications of bronchiitis	Management of croup	What is the equivalent of meconium ileus in older people and how is it treated
What causes epiglottitis and how does it present?	What's an addisonian crisis	Main sites of bronchiitis + distinguishing features	Complications of croup	Screening/diagnosis of CF
What is the management of epiglottitis?		What prevention is available for bronchiitis, who gets it and when?	Main sites of croup and distinguishing features	Management of CF
What is the main differential for epiglottitis and how does it differ?				Progress of CF
				Complications of CF
Cardiovascular				
Teratology of fetus	Transposition of great vessels	Patent ductus arteriosus	Ventricular septal defects	Atrial septal defects
How common is congenital heart disease?	Description of TOF, and what is levo TOF?	Description of PDA	Description of VSD	Description of ASD
What is the commonest congenital cardiac lesion	Epi/RF of TGV	Epi/RF of PDA	Epi/RF of VSD	Epi/RF of ASD
What are the cyanotic vs. acyanotic heart conditions	Presentation of TGV	Presentation of PDA + exam findings	Presentation of VSD	Presentation of ASD
What are the features of the teratology of fetus?	Investigations of TGV	Investigations of PDA	Investigations of VSD	Examination of ASD
Risk and risk factors of TOF	Management of TGV	Management of PDA	Management of VSD	Investigations of ASD
Pathophys of TOF		Complications of PDA	Complications of VSD	Management of ASD
Presentation of TOF				Complications of ASD
Investigations of TOF				
Management of TOF - acute and chronic				
Gastroenterology				
GORD	Intussusception	Pyleric stenosis	Hirschsprung's	Encopresis
Physiology, presentation and management of physiological GOR	Description of intussusception	Description of pyloric stenosis	Description of Hirschsprung's	Description of encopresis

Active recall

- Focus on **taking things out of your brain** rather than putting them in

- Reinforce content in different ways
- Ideas:
 - Attend tutoring classes
 - Teach your friends
 - Do practice questions
 - Make a podcast you can listen to later
 - Watch videos (Edrolo, Khan Academy, YouTube)

- Do Practice Questions

They are **ESSENTIAL** in **every subject**.

They are the number one way you can **apply and test your knowledge**.

First off, they help you to improve your **understanding the content**

And! They help you to prepare for SACs and, eventually, the exam.

Practice questions should be done whenever you learn something new/are revising an old topic

- Do Practice Exams
- The best way to prepare for the real exams is to do **practice exams**.
- Try to do **as many** practice exams for each of your subjects as you possibly can
- They take a fair bit of time – make sure you allow for this!!

BEWARE OF WRITING NOTES

- So many students end up with copious amounts of notes that they actually haven't learnt properly
- Never write notes that you haven't learnt the content for
- After writing a section of notes, quickly test yourself to see that you've learnt it before moving on
- Write them in a way that you can use for revision

Coping with information overload

1. Know only what you have to know – look at the study design
2. Break it down
3. Revise with active recall

Know what you have to know

- The study design is your most important resource for this year
- Just Google “(Subject) VCE study design”
- Write your notes based on the study design, NOT on the textbook
- Print it out and highlight it when you are done

- The **study design** is one of most **valuable** resources you have in Year 12
- The study design literally stipulates exactly what you need to know for the exam
- Regular consultation with the study design helps you to identify what you **haven't learnt yet / what you need to revise**
- Nearly all high achievers are familiar with the study design
- The beginning of the year and the end of the year (approaching exams) are the most important times to revisit the study design

Victorian Certificate of Education

BIOLOGY

STUDY DESIGN

Accreditation Period

Units 1 and 2

2016–2020

Units 3 and 4

2017–2021



Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to investigate and explain how cellular structures and systems function to sustain life.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge outlined in Area of Study 1 and the related key science skills on [pages 10 and 11](#) of the study design.

Key knowledge

Cell size, structure and function

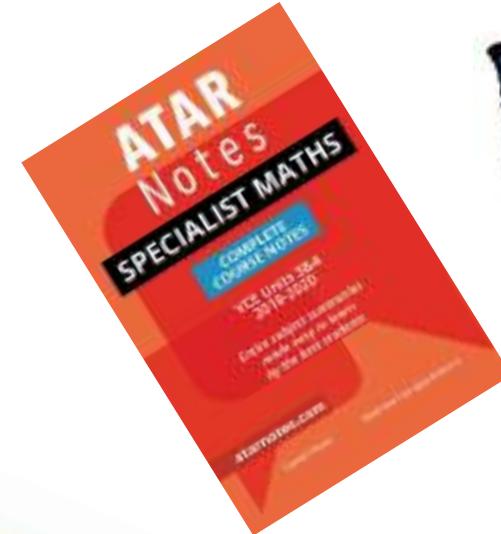
- cells as the basic structural feature of life on Earth, including the distinction between prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells
- surface area to volume ratio as an important factor in explaining the limitations of cell size and the need for internal compartments (organelles) with specific cellular functions
- the ultrastructure of plant and animal cells in terms of their organelles and identification of these organelles using the light microscope and electron micrographs.

Crossing the plasma membrane

- the characteristics of the plasma membrane as a semi-permeable boundary between the internal and external environments of a cell
- modes of transport of soluble substances across the plasma membrane including simple diffusion, facilitated diffusion, osmosis and active transport.

How To Study

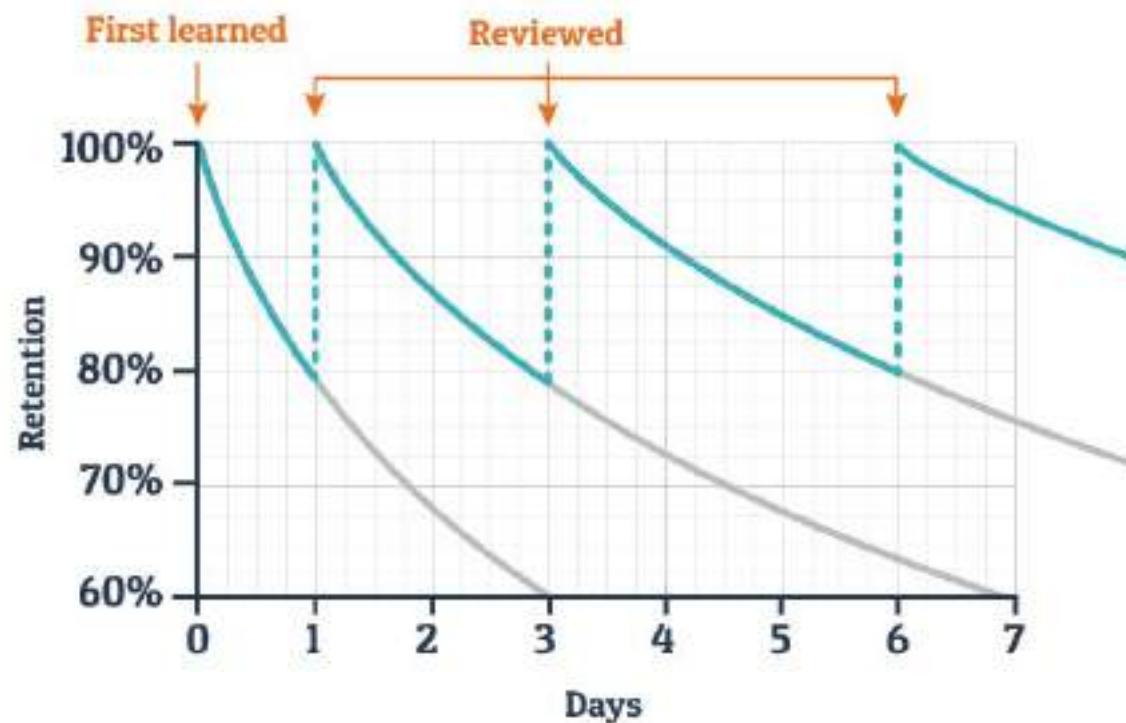
Framework



- Yellow objects:
 1. Duck
 2. Lemon
 3. Road work sign
- Orange objects:
 1. Basketball
 2. Carrot
 3. AtarNotes notes

Having a framework to store your information makes it much easier to store large amounts

Typical Forgetting Curve for Newly Learned Information



- Revision > Being ahead
- Look up spaced repetition and Kami – favourites of medical students

- Mindset
- Organisation
- How to Study
- Other Tips

The #1 Key to Success:

Be consistent!

- More than anything else, **consistent** studying over a long period of time really makes the most difference.
- It takes self-discipline and effort, but it will get results

“Net gains”:

- Staying hydrated
- Exercising
- The ‘extra five minutes’
- Paying attention in class
- Using your free periods productively
- Eating well
- Sleeping well
- Staying social
- Being organised

ATAR, SCALING AND PREREQUISITES

How does it all work?

- ATAR
- Aggregate
- Study Scores
- Subject Scaling

My Brilliant Nugget of Wisdom #1:

In VCE, effort amounts to results.

There are no cheat codes.

What is an ATAR?

ATAR = Australian Tertiary Admission Rank

It is a rank, not a score.

Basically, it compares you to the rest of the students in Year 12 in Australia.

So, if you get an ATAR of 95.00, it means you beat 95% of other students (*woohoo!*)

Aaaannd, if you get an ATAR of 10.00, it means you beat 10% of other students (*oops*)

- Your ATAR is calculated from your aggregate

What is your aggregate?

- Sort of like a “total score”
- **The sum of the scaled study scores for:**
 - A student’s top English subject
 - Their next three highest scores
 - And, if applicable, 10% of their fifth and sixth subjects

For example, if you got the following scaled results:

Legal Studies – 41

English – 40

Methods – 37

Chemistry – 36

Biology – 31

Physics – 28

Your aggregate = $41 + 40 + 37 + 36 + 31 + 28 = 159.9$

Your aggregate is then compared to everybody else's aggregate to calculate your ATAR.

So, if your aggregate is better than 50% of other students, you will get an ATAR of 50.00.

AGGREGATE	ATAR
210+	99.95
171.7	95.00
158.7	90.00
140.3	80.00
120.2	65.00
102.4	50.00

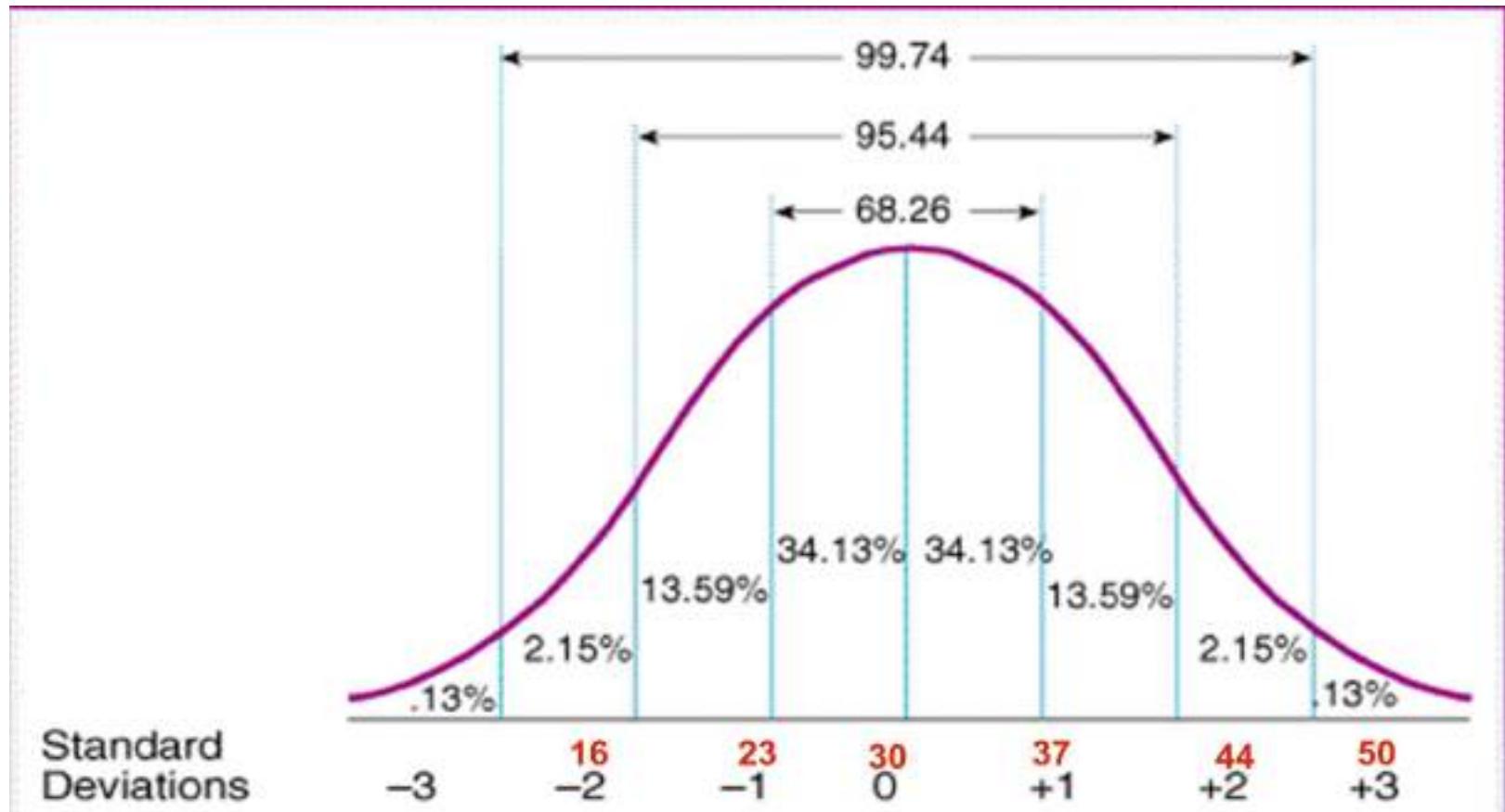
Source: <http://www.vtac.edu.au/files/pdf/Aggregate-ATAR-2016.pdf>

So how do you get these *study scores*?

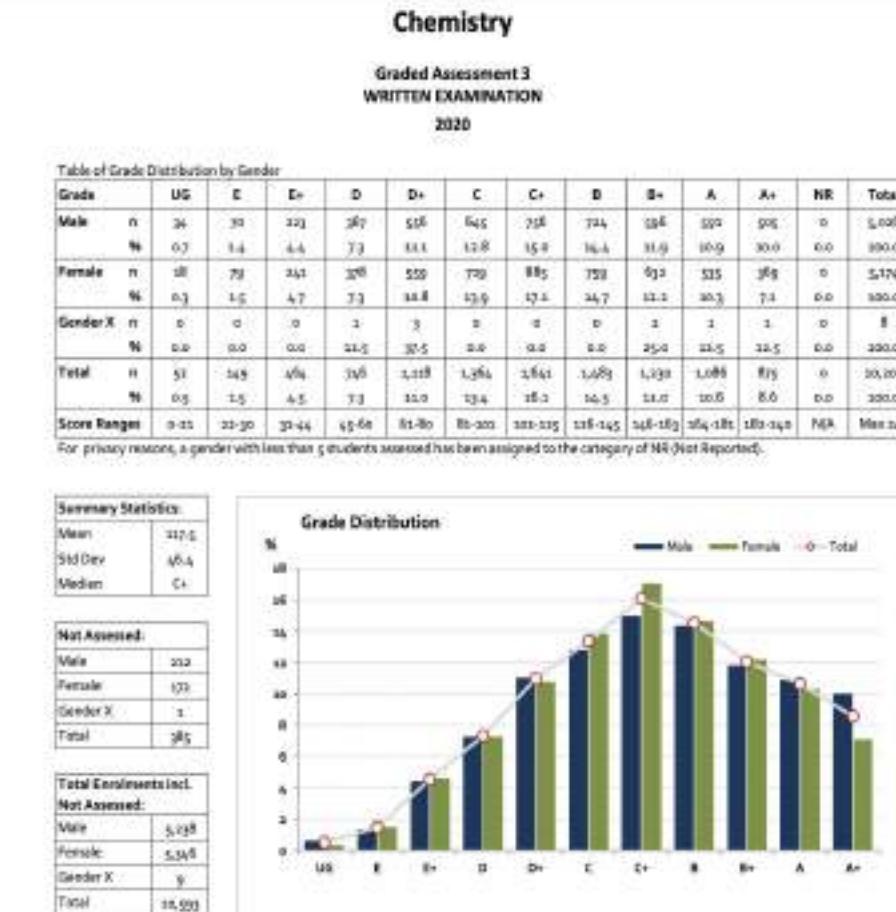
Study scores are a score from 1-50 for a particular subject.

MYTH: They are not a mark out of 50 (so if you get a 40, it doesn't mean your mark was an 80%).

The average raw score for every subject is 30. So if you get a 30, it means you scored higher than 50% of the state, and 50% of the state scored higher than you.



- Search Google for grade distributions
- E.g. 8.6% of students for A+ (around 9% so around study score of 40)
- To get A+ on exam = at least $182/240 = 76\%$
- Therefore, to get a 40 you needed to get around 76% on the exam



How are study scores calculated?

The process is like this:

- SACs and exam(s) are assigned a “graded assessment” (GA1, GA2, GA3).
- A letter grade from E to A+ is assigned to each graded assessment. (A+ = ~ top 10%).
- Study score derived from how well you did in each of the three graded assessments, whilst also considering how much those graded assessments are **weighted**.

Once you have your study scores, they then get scaled.

Why?

To make the process **as fair as possible** by making every subject ‘even’.

Scaling reflects how *competitive* a subject is – not how “difficult”.

How ‘competitive’ a subject is gets measured by how well students in that subject perform in their *other subjects*.

For example: Specialist Maths vs. PE

- Basically, the whole idea of scaling is to *equalise* subjects
- People think scaling gives you a “reward” or “punishment”, but that’s just not the case
- Theoretically, it is just as hard to get a scaled score of 45 in Specialist as it is to get a scaled score of 45 in Further.
- Scaling is designed so there is **NO** reward and **NO** punishment for taking a subject – because scaling adjusts for competitiveness to ensure there’s a level playing field

KEY POINT: Scaling makes VCE fair. Do not stress about it.

- Your raw study scores are then **scaled** based on the competitiveness of the subject
- Your **aggregate** is calculated off your scaled study scores
 - Top 4 subjects (including English)
 - 10% of 5th and 6th subjects
- Your **ATAR** is calculated off your aggregate

So should I pick subjects because they scale up?

NO!!

Subject	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Scaled	Used As
English	42	41.45	Down	Primary 4
Psych	48	47.96	Down	Primary 4
PE	47	46.33	Down	Primary 4
Physics	45	46.75	Up	Primary 4
Methods	36	41.47	Up	Increment 10%
HHD	40	37.14	Down	Increment 10%

14 Dec 2015, 6:49 am

Results 2015.
VCE: S ATAR: 98.65.
EN01: 42 (A+, A+, A+)
MA11: 36 (B+, B+, A)
PE03: 47 (A+, A+, A+)
PH03: 45 (A+, A+, A+)
PY03: 48 (A+, A+, A+)
VCE

Okay, so this is where it gets a little bit more complicated.

These here aren't necessarily your actual SAC marks from throughout the year. Your SAC marks get changed (moderated) depending on how well your school does on the exam.

Why? Imagine you write a great English essay, feel really happy... and get a B. It turns out this B was the best mark in your year level – your teacher is just a really tough marker! Your mate at another school writes an average essay and gets an A – their teacher is a really easy marker! Would this be fair?

For example, let's have a look at this table.

	School A	School B	School C
Average SAC Mark	90%	50%	65%
Average Exam Mark	50%	80%	65%
Effect on Moderation	SACs will go down	SACs will go up	SACs will stay about the same

This is not necessarily the exact process that VCAA uses, but this is their reason for moderating SACs. Again, it's all about making VCE fairer.

Rankings are basically how your SAC scores actually get moderated.

Your **ranking** is where you are ranked in your year level at school compared to everyone else at your school, based on your SAC scores.

So if you have the second best average SAC score throughout the year, your ranking will be #2. If you have the best average SAC score (yay!) your ranking will be #1.

For the purpose of this example, let's pretend that there's only five people doing a particular subject in your year level.

	Average SAC Score	SAC Ranking	Exam Score	Moderated SAC Score
Bob	90%	1	70%	95%
You	80%	2	95%	85%
Bill	70%	3	85%	70%
Jack	60%	4	65%	70%
Jill	50%	5	70%	65%

Your SAC scores get moderated so the person with the best SAC ranking still gets the best SAC scores, and so on. It wouldn't be fair otherwise.

Keep in mind that your exam score still counts as your exam score! (And therefore still counts towards your study score). So it's definitely worth doing as well as you can on the exam (and in every SAC).

The bottom line is that you want to do as well as you can on every SAC so you can get a good ranking, and you also want your whole year level to go well on the exam.

What scores do I need to get a certain ATAR?

<https://vce.atarcalc.com/>

	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Aggregate	ATAR
English	30	28	131.4	73.75
Methods	30	34		
Chem	30	34		
Biology	30	30		
Bus. Man	30	26		
Psych	30	28		

What scores do I need to get a certain ATAR?

<https://vce.atarcalc.com/>

	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Aggregate	ATAR
English	35	33	154.5	87.95
Methods	35	40		
Chem	35	39		
Biology	35	36		
Bus. Man	35	32		
Psych	35	33		

What scores do I need to get a certain ATAR?

<https://vce.atarcalc.com/>

	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Aggregate	ATAR
English	40	39	176.7	96.40
Methods	40	45		
Chem	40	44		
Biology	40	41		
Bus. Man	40	38		
Psych	40	39		

What scores do I need to get a certain ATAR?

<https://vce.atarcalc.com/>

	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Aggregate	ATAR
English	45	45	194.9	99.30
Methods	45	48		
Chem	45	47		
Biology	45	46		
Bus. Man	45	44		
Psych	45	45		

My Brilliant Nugget of Wisdom #2:

Control what you can control, and don't worry about the uncontrollable.

What can you control?

- Your performance on SACs and the exam (or at least how prepared you are)

What can't you control?

- Your ranking
- Subject scaling
- SAC moderation
- Your aggregate/ATAR

My Attitude During Year 12: Do as well as I could on every SAC and exam and see where it gets me. Always work to improve!

- You complete SACs at school, and, based on your results, receive a **ranking**
- You do the exam. Your **SAC results are moderated** based on the exam performance of your year level (including you!) and your ranking
- You get a raw **study score** from 1-50 for each subject based on your moderated SAC results and your exam result(s)

- Your raw study scores are then **scaled** based on the competitiveness of the subject
- Your **aggregate** is calculated off your scaled study scores
 - Top 4 subjects (including English)
 - 10% of 5th and 6th subjects
- Your **ATAR** is calculated off your aggregate

Thanks for coming!

Good luck for the rest of the year!